

UNIVERSITY HEALTH CARE HOSPITALS AND CLINICS

GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION

HOUSESTAFF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

CLINICAL OBSERVER/SHADOWING POLICY

Section 5 No. 8 Rev.4
2007

Review Date: August 2009

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Chapter: Liability Coverage

I. PURPOSE:

To establish a policy and procedure for departments that want to have short-term visiting residents (international or US medical graduates) who are not eligible under the "Visiting Housestaff" policy and who are not eligible to provide clinical services.

II. DEFINITION:

An **observer**, as defined by Webster, is "a representative sent to observe but not participate officially in a gathering."

III. POLICY:

Departments may elect to allow physicians to come for observation or "shadowing" experiences within the department. This is completely a departmental discretionary decision and must be arranged solely with department representatives. Observers, or shadowers, will not have any clinical responsibilities but must complete institutional documentation requirements in order to avoid liability and confidentiality problems. These are HIPAA requirements.

III. PROCEDURE:

1. Observers, or shadowers, are non-employees. In order to avoid liability exposure to the institution, a Shadowing Application must be completed prior to the shadowing experience. Shadowing Applications are available on line at <http://uuhsc.utah.edu/privacy> (click on "Resources", then "Health Care Forms". Under "Training & Education", you will find the Shadow Application form). The completed application must be kept on file in the Department and copied to the HIPAA Privacy Office per instructions on the application.
2. Observers, or shadowers, must complete University HIPAA training. [Please](#) call the Privacy Office at 801-587-9241 for information on how to complete this training. A copy of the HIPAA completion certification must be kept on file in the department and copied to HIPAA Privacy Office.
3. Clinical observers/shadowers are not eligible for computer access. Clinical observers/shadowers, if desired, can obtain a "Visitor" identification badge in the Hospital ID Office for a nominal charge.
4. A clinical observer may:
 - Watch, listen, and ask questions of medical students, residents, and attending physicians.
 - Scrub and observe an operative procedure from within the operating room. Look at x-rays.
 - Attend walk rounds, grand rounds, journal clubs and conferences.
 - Use the medical library.

- Touch or examine a patient only with the permission of the patient and presence of an attending supervisor.

A clinical observer must:

- Be introduced to each patient they observe.

A clinical observer may not:

- Write anything in any patient chart.
- Write any prescriptions.
- Touch any patient, or talk to any patient without a supervisor being present. Give any orders, either verbal or written, to any other health care provider or patient.

Approval body: Graduate Medical Education Committee

Approval date: 12/04

Policy Owner: Graduate Medical Education

Historical Information:

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